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Arguments that take Counter-considerations into Account

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Abstract: This paper examines arguments that take counter-considerations into account, and it does so from a dialogical point of view. According to my account, a counterconsideration is part of a critical reaction from a real or imagined opponent, and an arguer may take it into account in his argument in at least six fully responsive ways. Conductive arguments (or: *pro and con arguments*, *balance of considerations arguments*) will be characterized as one of these types. In this manner, the paper aims to show how conducive, and related kinds of argument can be understood dialogically.

Résumé: On examine d'un point de vue dialogique les arguments qui tiennent compte de l'appui des objections d'un adversaire réel ou imaginaire. Un raisonneur peut en tenir compte de six façons, une desquelles sont les arguments conducteurs (ou : les arguments fondés sur le pour et contre, les arguments qui pèsent le fondement des positions opposées). De cette manière, on tente de montrer comment ce type d'argument et ceux qui y sont reliés peuvent être compris d'un point de vue dialogique.

1. Introduction

The notion of a conducive argument has been introduced by Carl Wellman in his book *Challenge and Response: Justification in Ethics* (1971). In Wellman's view, the notions of

induction and deduction do not deal adequately with the characteristics of ethical argumentation, and the notion of conduction is needed to explain how ethical statements can be justified. After having been discussed in detail by, among others, Govier (1979) and Hitchcock (1980), the idea of a conductive argument has recently given rise to a number of discussions in the philosophy of argument (Johnson and Blair, 2011; Adler, 2013; Hitchcock, 2013), many of which involve the concept of a "counterconsideration." Also recently, counterconsiderations have been put forward as being of primary importance within the dialogical theory of criticism, as developed by Krabbe and van Laar (Krabbe and van Laar 2011; van Laar and Krabbe 2013). In this paper, I will discuss counterconsiderations as they have been studied within the literature on conduction taking the latter, dialogical perspective. By dealing with counterconsiderations in this way, I follow a suggestion from Blair (2011, p. 6).¹

According to Wellman, "[c]onduction can best be defined as that sort of reasoning in which 1) a conclusion about some individual case 2) is drawn non-conclusively 3) from one or more premises about the same case 4) without appeal to other cases" (Wellman, 1971, p. 52). He identifies three patterns of conduction. In pattern 1, "a single reason is given for the conclusion" (Wellman, 1971, p. 55). For example: "You ought to help him for he has been very kind to you" (Wellman, 1971, p. 55). In pattern 2, "several considerations, each of which may be independently relevant, are brought together into a unified argument from which a single conclusion is drawn" (Wellman, 1971, p. 56). For example: "You ought to take your son to the movie because you promised to do so, it is a good movie, and you have nothing better to do this afternoon" (Wellman, 1971, p. 56). A pattern 3 conductive argument is "that form of argument in which some conclusion is drawn from both positive and negative considerations ... reasons against the conclusion are included as well as reasons for it" (Wellman, 1971, p. 57). For example: "Although your lawn needs cutting, you ought to

¹ This paper is influenced by Rescher's book *Dialectics* (1977), yet my conceptual framework differs in subtle ways from his. Therefore, I will compare some terms that I employ with those by Rescher, largely in the footnotes.

² Although I am not going to provide an interpretation of Wellman, I do think that a dialogical interpretation of the role of counterconsiderations fits his

take your son to the movies because the picture is ideal for children and will be gone by tomorrow” (Wellman, 1971, p. 57). In this paper, the emphasis lies on examples that fit the patterns 2 and 3, and, rather than dealing with the proper interpretation of Wellman,² I will deal with a number of simple examples, advanced as typically conductive by Wellman or Govier,³ and conceive of them as argumentative structures generated in dialogue.⁴

Specifically, I will examine how conductive arguments can be generated in dialogical exchanges between an arguing proponent and an opponent who criticizes the proponent’s case *actively*, i.e., by advancing counterconsiderations, rather than by mere questioning.⁵ What is more, I will develop a general account of the ways counterconsiderations can be taken into account by a proponent, so as to show that conductive argument can be characterized as just one particular member of a family of closely related argumentative structures. In previous papers on the dialogical theory of criticism, it has been examined how criticism can be characterized in a more or less systematic

² Although I am not going to provide an interpretation of Wellman, I do think that a dialogical interpretation of the role of counterconsiderations fits his dialogical inclinations, as they emerge in at least three places in his 1971 book. (a) Wellman locates reasoning, “in those conversations in which one person is trying to defend some statement against the attacks of other people” (1971, p. 86). (b) In his view, the justification of a statement consists in meeting the challenges actually made to it: “One obvious objection to my view (...) is that (...) to justify fully one must meet all possible challenges. I argue that this is not so and that the data of ethical justification are simply any premises, arguments, or moves that are in fact accepted” (p. xii). (c) Also, he conceives of “valid” and “invalid” as words that “derive their meaning from the role they play in the process of criticism, a process of thinking and discussion which sustains or destroys the persuasiveness of argument. To say that an argument is valid is to claim that when subjected to an indefinite amount of criticism it is persuasive for everyone who thinks in the normal way” (p. 99).

³ I underwrite the view, advocated by Hitchcock (2013) and Finocchiaro (2011), that it is indispensable for the development of argumentation theory to study cases of argumentation as they occur in natural contexts, rather than only artificial examples. In this study, however, I am to sketch the outlines of a dialogical account of counterconsiderations, and I consider it to be a legitimate starting point to do so by means of a number of simplified examples. To what extent the results apply to the complexities of real-life argumentation is left for different occasions.

⁴ The more involved examples are “solo-arguments,” as Blair uses the term, i.e., arguments that reach a particular level of internal structure and complexity (1998, p. 333).

⁵ Cf. Finocchiaro 1980, on “active evaluation.”

manner (Krabbe and van Laar, 2011), as well as what the obligations of a critic amount to (van Laar, 2012; van Laar and Krabbe, 2013; van Laar 2014.). This paper attempts to extend this project in the theory of criticism, by conceiving of six types of complex argument as six different, *fully responsive* ways for an arguer to respond to or anticipate counterconsiderations from real or imagined opponents. A *full* response by an arguer, as understood here, is the kind of response to a counterconsideration where the arguer makes it clear for each of the counterconsideration's components whether he acknowledges it or whether he aims to refute it. A conductive argument of pattern 3, then, is the kind of argument where the arguer acknowledges the counterconsideration's correctness as well as its negative relevance to his thesis, but where he claims to be able to refute its sufficiency to defeat his argument. Given that more types of full responses are available to the arguer, my conceptual hypothesis is that conductive argument is (just) one of the fully responsive ways of taking counterconsiderations into account, and that each of these types merit equal attention in the theory of argumentation.

I will first deal with the ways in which an opponent may actively criticize the proponent's position by advancing a counterconsideration (Section 2). Second, I will discuss in what ways the proponent can try to refute the counterconsideration, and how each of these ways of refutation may be wrapped up in an argument (Section 3). Third, I will proceed by listing the six ways in which the proponent can react in a *fully responsive* manner to a counterconsideration, and the six corresponding kinds of fully responsive arguments (Section 4). Finally, I will conclude (among other things): that the distinct patterns of conductive arguments correspond to distinct dialogue patterns; that pattern 3 conductive argument is just one member of a family of fully responsive arguments; that the weighing metaphor is *not essential* to grasping pattern 3 conductive argument; and that a full-fledged dialogical perspective is capable of providing an adequate account of conductive arguments, and their close relatives (Section 5).

2. Putting counterconsiderations to use

Consider an argumentative dialogue, along the lines of the norms for persuasion dialogue,⁶ where the participants are trying to resolve their differences of opinion on the merits of both sides, as they perceive those merits. Suppose, the proponent asserts as his standpoint that “you should take your son to the movies.” His opponent, then, may want to challenge his thesis and hear the proponent’s arguments: “Why so?”⁷ Yet, if the proponent does not fully understand the opponent’s critical stance—that is, he does not understand what motivates her challenge, he lacks information that would be of use to him when trying to devise a convincing argument that answers her doubts. In such a situation, the proponent should be allowed to request the opponent to *explain* her challenge: “Explain (Why so?),” and the opponent may want to answer that question by explaining her motivation for being critical. The proposition that provides the explanation is - what I will refer to as - a “counterconsideration.”⁸ In our example, the opponent might explain her motivation by advancing as a counterconsideration: “My lawn needs to be cut,” or equivalently, but in a questioning mode “How about my lawn needing to be cut?” Of course, an opponent may also choose to speed up the dialogue and anticipate such a request from her proponent, adding the counterconsideration to her challenge spontaneously, in which case we can say that she has advanced, what Krabbe calls, a “bound challenge” (Krabbe 2007). I will also speak of a “bound challenge” if its two parts are distributed over two of the opponent’s turns.

Such a counterconsideration does not stand on its own, but always accompanies the expression of critical doubt or a critical reaction of some other type, such as the expression of an opposite standpoint. I will restrict myself to counterconsiderations that accompany challenges, i.e., bound

⁶ Cf. *Critical Discussion* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004), *Permissive Persuasion Dialogue* (Walton and Krabbe, 1995) and *Basic Critical Discussion* (van Laar 2007).

⁷ In this paper, a critical reaction of the form “Why T?” expresses a request for argumentation, and of consequence critical doubt. It does not express a request for an explanation, which requires a separate locution type.

⁸ Unless the proposition attacked had the status of a presumptive commitment, the opponent is not under a dialectical obligation to provide such an explanation, even though such an explanation would enhance the quality of the dialogue (van Laar and Krabbe 2013).

challenges of the form "Why T? How about C?" I will analyse this combination of locutions by specifying its illocutionary force, its propositional focus, the norm it appeals to, and the level of dialogue it engages (for characterising critical reactions by means of force, focus, norm and level, see: Krabbe and van Laar, 2011).

The illocutionary force of a bound challenge

How about counterconsiderations that accompany the opponent's challenge? Following van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004), a challenge will be understood as a speech act that is a request for argumentation, performed by the opponent as part of her individual task to show that a critical stance towards the proponent's main thesis is consistent and tenable, notwithstanding the propositions that she has conceded or will be prepared to concede.

The counterconsideration "C," when advanced in response to a proposition "T,"⁹ suggests a reasoning "C, if C then not-T, therefore not-T." If the opponent uses this reasoning to express argumentation, she has advanced *counterargumentation*.¹⁰ Yet, the counterconsideration need not be used to express genuine argumentation, and I will focus on those situations where it does not, for the reason of showing, if only sideways, that even in a persistently non-mixed, asymmetrical discussion¹¹ with an opponent who merely doubts, and critically tests the proponent's position from that perspective, critical reactions can be *active* (Finocchiaro, 1980, p. 339) and *directive* (van Laar and Krabbe, 2013). Even if the counterconsideration does not constitute counterargumentation, it aims to defeat the proponent's argument (cf. Pollock, 1995)

⁹ As I will explain in more detail below, "T" can be the proponent's main thesis, or a subordinate thesis, or it can be a connection premise associated with his argument.

¹⁰ In that case, the reasoning from "C" to "not-T" has the apparent purpose of convincing the proponent to accept "not-T," on the basis of what he is prepared to concede, so that the opponent becomes a second proponent.

¹¹ Van Eemeren and Grootendorst characterize a non-mixed difference of opinion as one where only one standpoint has been advanced. The other side, then, has merely expressed critical doubt regarding this standpoint (2004, pp. 119-120).

insofar as the proponent must give up or develop a different line of defence, if he is unable to refute the counterconsideration. Thus, in my usage of those terms, the opponent tries to *defeat* the proponent's arguments (without needing to incur any burden of proof), whereas the proponent discharges his burden of proof by trying to *refute* the opponent's counterconsiderations. A counterconsideration is expressive of two different, yet related messages.

First, as we have seen, a counterconsideration expresses what underlies, and motivates the opponent's critical stance. In other words, it *explains* to the proponent how she considers her position to be a tenable position, notwithstanding her concessions: That the lawn needs cutting explains why she would not be required to go to the movies with her son.

Second, with a counterconsideration the opponent directs the proponent to elaborate on or even save his position by refuting this very counterconsideration, or else, to give up his thesis "T." Thus, within an argumentative setting, a counterconsideration provides an explanation and, additionally, strategic advice about the kind of argumentation that could turn out to be convincing to the opponent, or at least eradicate one reason for doubt. If the proponent wants to convince his opponent, he needs to show that the lawn needs no cutting, or, alternatively, that its needing cutting does not defeat his view that his addressee needs to go to the movies with her son. To grasp this latter, directive function of counterconsiderations, I will elaborate on the ways in which the proponent can refute a counterconsideration, in Section 3.¹²

There are two ways in which an opponent can convey an explanatory counterconsideration. (a) First, she may express a counterconsideration with a "cautious assertion," that is, a proposition of the form "P is the case for all that you (the adversary) have shown" or "P's being the case is compatible with everything you've said (i.e., have maintained or conceded)" (Rescher 1977, p. 6). In our example, the opponent might be taken as cautiously asserting three propositions: "As far as you've shown, the lawn might need cutting, which could, as far

¹² In addition to the primary function of motivating one's doubt, and the secondary function of giving (willingly or not) strategic advice, advancing a counterconsideration also may serve, depending on the situation, purposes that are less central to its nature, such as showing one's willingness to resolve the issue, or emphasizing the width of the gap between participants, or showing one's knowledge on the subject, and so on.

as you've shown, be a reason not to go to the movies with my son. Therefore, as far as you've shown, I should not go to the movies with my son.”¹³ Thus, by advancing a cautious assertion, one does not incur the obligation to offer proof upon the proponent's request. (b) Second, she can offer her counterconsiderations in a purely questioning mode: “Why T? How about C? Might C be true? And could C imply not-T?” In our example, the opponent might utter: “How about the lawn? Could it need cutting, and could that be a reason for me not to go to the movies with my son?” In argumentative contexts, the function of the counterconsideration in both presentational modes is the same: To get the proponent either to give in, or to refute “C,” in some way or another and to elaborate on his argument by doing so. I will refer to both ways of presenting a counterconsideration as *cautious assertion*. Yet, the function is

¹³ Counterconsideration “C,” when advanced in explanation of a challenge to a thesis “T” is close to what Rescher labels a “provisoed denial,” where a proposition “C” is cautiously asserted together with a (defeasible) inference from “C” to the denial of the interlocutor's thesis “T” (1977, p. 9). Counterconsideration “C,” when advanced in explanation of a challenge to the argumentative connection of the proponent's argument “U, therefore T” is similar to Rescher's notion of a “weak distinction” (p. 12). In Rescher's system, a weak distinction is of the form: “not-T/(C&U) & †(C&U),” where X/Y means that X obtains, other things being equal, when Y does (p. 6), where “†(C&U)” indicates that “C&U” is cautiously asserted, where “T” is the thesis defended by the proponent, where “U” is the reason that the proponent had advanced in support of “T,” and where “C” is, what I label, the counterconsideration advanced by the opponent. Rescher makes the opponent repeat the proponent's reason in favour of “T” in her weak distinction against “T.” An advantage of Rescher's way of presenting a counterconsideration focused on an argumentative connection is that it succinctly indicates the opponent's view on the logical connection between on the one hand “C” and “U,” and on the other “not-T” (See also the way Freeman conceives of the warrants for pattern 3 conductive arguments, 2011, p. 135). But a disadvantage is that it is only to be grasped from the previous dialogue moves that “U” has the dialectical function to support “T,” but that “C” functions as a critical counterconsideration against “T.” In order to emphasize, what Rescher himself labels, *probative asymmetries*, I will not adopt his method of presenting counterconsiderations. In note 27, I explain that my way of modelling a counterconsideration that explain the opponent's challenge to the proponent's argumentative connection is, when translated to the language of propositional logic, equivalent to Rescher's way of modelling a weak distinction.

not, as in the case of counterargumentation, to convince the proponent to accept a position opposite to his own.¹⁴

In what way, if any, can the opponent nevertheless be said to be committing herself to “C” and to the connection between “C” and the denial of the proponent’s thesis in those situations where she presents her counterconsideration cautiously? As we saw, it cannot be the kind of commitment that brings the obligation to defend, if challenged by one’s interlocutor. The opponent need not act as a second proponent. But neither are “C” and the connection between “C” and “not-T” the kind of propositional material that the proponent can make use of in his attempts to convince the opponent,¹⁵ and thus it is also not to be characterized as being a kind of *concession* either. Rather, the kind of commitment that a cautiously asserted counterconsideration leads to should be specified in even weaker terms. According to my proposal, the opponent, after having challenged thesis “T” and after having advanced the cautiously asserted counterconsideration “C,” becomes committed to “C” and to “If C then not-T” in the weak sense that *if* the proponent successfully refutes counterconsideration “C” in either of three admissible ways (specified in Section 3), the opponent should abandon her critical strategy either (a) by declaring that she has been convinced of the acceptability or defensibility of “T,” or (b) by initiating a new line of criticism, for instance by challenging a different part of the proponent’s argumentation, or (c) by maintaining her challenge of “T” but now with a new counterconsideration. We might dub this kind of commitment, putting Rescher’s terminology to new use, a “cautious commitment” and the opponent’s reasoning “C therefore not-T” a piece of “cautious reasoning.”¹⁶

¹⁴ It is also possible for the opponent to strongly assert the connection between “C” and “not-T,” but to cautiously assert “C” itself, or vice versa. It is also possible to strongly deny “T,” yet to merely motivate the denial by means of cautious assertions, rather than advancing a counterargumentation. For the sake of simplicity, I assume that the full reasoning that underlies a counterconsideration (“C and if C then not-T, therefore not-T”) is advanced in a cautious mode.

¹⁵ Generally, it is the denial of a counterconsideration, but not the counterconsideration itself that might be used profitably by the proponent in his attempts to convince the opponent.

¹⁶ If a counterconsideration is strongly asserted, it constitutes counterargumentation. In that case it has, normally in addition to an explanatory and an advisory function, also a third function, to wit: to persuade the interlocutor (the first proponent) on the basis of propositions

Focus

The propositional focus of a critical reaction is the proposition, or the set of propositions, that is negatively evaluated in the critical reaction, or that awaits negative evaluation if the critical reaction is not responded to satisfactorily.

The bound challenge can first be focused on an assertion "T" that functions as the proponent's main thesis, or as a reason within his argument. In such cases, the bound challenge constitutes "tenability criticism" (Krabbe and van Laar 2011; cf. Krabbe 2007).

If the proponent has offered reason "U" for "T," then the proponent can be considered to be committed to the argumentative connection between "U" and "T." The opponent can, secondly, focus her bound challenge on this connection, that I call the argument's "connection premise."¹⁷ This connection will be referred to as " $U \Rightarrow T$," where the arrow denotes that a commitment on the opponent's part to "U" leads or should lead, within the current circumstances, to a commitment to "T." A commitment by the opponent to " $U \Rightarrow T$ " means that she acknowledges that if she were committed to "U" then this would be *sufficient reason*, within the circumstances at hand, for also committing herself to "T," it being dialectically untenable for her to remain committed to "U" yet challenging "T" at the same time.¹⁸ As the proponent commits himself to the

that he has conceded or that he should be willing to concede. Note that a counterargumentation can be merely *ex concessis*, and thereby not expressive of the speaker's motivations. Thus, not all counterargumentation includes an *explanatory* counterconsideration.

¹⁷ Admittedly, the proposition that expresses the connection only becomes a real *premise* when the proponent makes it explicit or offers support for it, for example in response to the opponent connection criticism.

¹⁸ As we have seen in a previous note, " X/Y ", in Rescher terminology means "X obtains, other things being equal, when Y does" (p. 6). This means, Rescher elaborates, that both " X/Y " and " $\text{not-}X/Y \& Z$ " can be true, according to a dialogue participant. In other words, " X/Y " can be seen as expressing that "Y" is relevant evidence for "X." In my notation, " $U \Rightarrow T$," means something different, namely that premise "U" *suffices*, within the current circumstances, for the opponent to accept "T," if she would accept "U," so that it would be incoherent on her part to accept both " $U \Rightarrow T$ " as well as " $(U \wedge S) \Rightarrow \text{not-T}$." In other words, when the opponent commits herself to " $U \Rightarrow T$," she concedes that, *all things considered*, a commitment to "U" ought

conditional statement " $U \Rightarrow T$ " by advancing his argument,¹⁹ the opponent can always raise a bound challenge such as "Why $U \Rightarrow T$? How about C?" In such cases, the bound challenge constitutes "connection criticism" (cf. Krabbe 2007).

Norm

Given that a critical reaction contains a negative evaluation, or at least prepares for it, it must appeal to a norm of some kind, and the (prospective) evaluation is based on that yardstick.

Like a pure challenge, a bound challenge can best be seen as appealing to a rule for reasonable discussion according to which a proponent should, if so requested, offer an argument in favour of whatever is challenged (such as the "Obligation-to-Defend Rule," van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). For it is up to the proponent to refute the counterconsideration, and in that way argue in favour of his thesis.

In addition, by steering the proponent to develop his argument by means of refuting the counterconsideration, the opponent can also be seen as appealing to an optimality rule. An optimality rule is the kind of rule with which we can distinguish, among admissible non-fallacious moves, between those of higher and those of lower quality, such as those arguments that are more and those that are less convincing (Krabbe 2002). By advancing a bound challenge, the opponent directs the proponent to advance arguments that she, apparently, considers to be more pertinent than others.

to bring a commitment to "T." Of course, the opponent can also commit herself of such a connection, if she conceives of the connection as defeasible in the sense that in other circumstances "U" would not suffice for "T."

¹⁹ The proponent can support the conditional sentence, " $U \Rightarrow T$," associated with the proponent's argument, by advancing a generalization of this conditional sentence, its warrant. However, the proponent may also support this conditional statement in a different way, such as by stating that some expert in the field has stated that "T, if U," or by advancing that "If V then T and if U then V," neither of which counts as a generalization of the associated conditional. In other words, I adopt a *particularist* stance, and not a *generalist* one, with regard to the issue of whether the proponent is always committing himself to a generalization of the particular connection between the premises and conclusion of his argument (see for particularist positions: Verheij 2006; and Bermejo-Luque 2004; See for generalist positions: Hitchcock 2007, and Govier 2011).

Level

Dialogical contributions that quite directly contribute to the development or the dismantling of the proponent's argumentation, such as arguments and challenges, can be seen as taking place at the ground level dialogue, i.e., the dialogue about the issue at hand. Those contributions, however, that are about the legitimacy of dialogue moves (e.g.: has a fallacy been committed?), or about the institutional legitimacy (e.g.: has the legal evidence been obtained by admissible means?), or about matters of strategy (e.g.: will this line of defence lead to a convincing case?), can be seen as only quite indirectly contributing to the development or dismantling of the proponent's case, and are thereby to be located at a metalevel dialogue.

Leaving special cases out of consideration, bound challenges normally are ground level contributions, notwithstanding the strategic flavour that the message of strategic advice conveys.

3. Refuting a counterconsideration

A proponent can try to refute a counterconsideration "C" in three principal ways. First, the proponent can do so by denying the correctness of the counterconsideration, and argue in favour of that denial. Second, he can do so by denying the sufficiency of "C" to defeat his thesis "T", i.e., by denying that "not-T, if C," and argue in favour of that denial.²⁰ While dealing with these first two options for the proponent, we will find that, when a proponent tries to refute more than one counterconsideration consecutively, the result may be an argument "in which premises are put forward as separately and non-conclusively relevant to support a conclusion," i.e., a conductive argument, as conceived of by Govier (Govier, 2011, p. 262; See also: Govier, 1999, p. 155). A third way to refute a counterconsideration "C" amounts to claiming that the counterconsideration can be

²⁰ A special way to refute "C" as insufficient to defeat "T" is to claim that "C" is not even negatively relevant to "T." I return to this special option in Section 4.

dismissed for being too far-fetched, so that it need not be taken into account.

When dealing with these three options, I will also discuss how the resulting dialogues can be, as it were, wrapped up in what Blair might call a *solo-argument* (Blair, 1998, p. 333). I treat such a complex argument as an implicit dialogue where the writer or speaker takes the primary responsibility for the tasks to be fulfilled by the proponent who anticipates or responds to critical reactions that he himself, as a writer or speaker, makes available in the text, as it were in the service of the opponent (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1992, p. 43; Krabbe, 2002; van Laar, 2007).²¹

First, I deal with the ways to refute a counterconsideration that is part of a tenability criticism, which is focused on the main or on a subordinate thesis. Second, I deal with the ways to refute a counterconsideration that is part of a connection criticism, which is focused on a specific argumentative connection of the proponent's arguments.

3.1 Counterconsiderations focused on a standpoint or substandpoint

Refuting the counterconsideration as false

Suppose the opponent challenged "T," where "T" is either the main standpoint, or a reason that, by being challenged, has turned into a substandpoint. And suppose she adds "Counter C," which, as we have seen, can be analyzed as a full reasoning of the form (from now on I use short-hands) " C and $C \Rightarrow \neg T$, therefore $\neg T$ " (where we assume that both premises of the reasoning and its conclusion are asserted cautiously). In such a situation, the proponent may choose to take responsibility for the falsity of " C ," and assert to that purpose the denial of " C ," which, if challenged, must itself be argued for, thus generating an attempt at refutation.

²¹ Note that also pure challenges invite the proponent to offer similar argumentative structures, many of which are discussed by Snoeck Henkemans (1992).

Proponent:	T
Opponent:	Why T? Counter C.
Proponent:	$\neg C$
Opponent:	Why $\neg C$?
Proponent:	U

Figure 1

For example, if the opponent challenges “You ought to go to the movies with your son (T)” by countering “Why would I? As far as you’ve shown, I don’t owe him that (Why T? Counter C),” then the proponent may try to refute it by denying it: “You do! (not-C).” If challenged, this denial stands in need of defence itself: “For, you promised him to go (U).”

The denial of “C” becomes part of the proponent’s defence of his thesis, and if wrapped up in a quasi-monological argument, the result could read: “You ought to take your son to the movies (T), because you owe him that ($\neg C$),”²² which I will refer to as a complex argument of type 1.

T, because $\neg C$. $\neg C$, because U.

Figure 2. A complex argument of type 1

In such a situation, would the proponent claim to have offered a sufficient set of premises to convince the opponent? Possibly, but not necessarily. Minimally, the proponent’s claim is that one motivation for being critical should have been taken away, but

²² According to Finocchiaro, “the conjunction of an objection and its corresponding reply, (O-j & R-j), or some appropriately reworded phrasing of it that might be needed for grammatical propriety (...) would constitute a reason supporting the conclusion C” (2005, p. 321). Note that from my dialectical and particularist viewpoint, the refutation of a counterconsideration also counts as an argument if the counterconsideration is strongly tied to the context of the dialogue, and no plausible law-like generalization that would imply the specific connection premise of the argument would be available. Thus, if the counterconsideration would be “My lawn needs a cutting,” the resulting argument would be “You should bring your son to the movies, because your lawn does not need a cutting,” which is in the context of use a potentially convincing and reasonable argument.

he may recognise the possibility that the opponent may have other grounds for being critical towards his thesis, and so he may, in his own view, not have discharged his burden of proof regarding “T” in each and every respect. On the other hand, the proponent does seem to claim that his reason “ $\neg C$ ” does help to convince the opponent of his thesis “T,” in the sense that he could elaborate on and extend his case for “T,” such that the final result is an argument with a set of premises that, taken together, are or should be sufficiently convincing for this opponent. In other words, by refuting “C” as false, the proponent has offered a reason in favour of his thesis “T,” such that it can be supplemented with further premises resulting in a set of premises that, if all are accepted by the opponent, would make a critical stance towards “T” untenable. In such a situation, an arguer can be said, to use Govier's terminology (Govier 1999; 2011, p. 268; See also Section 5), to have offered a *positively relevant* yet not per se a *conclusive support* for his conclusion.

Whereas Govier conceptualizes positive relevance of proposition “P” for proposition “T” in terms of the availability of a *ceteris paribus* generalization such that the specific connection between “P” and “T” forms a special case (1999, p. 171), I define positive relevance in terms of a particularist notion of sufficiency. The set of propositions “ P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n ” is *sufficient* for proposition “T,” for a participant within a particular dialogical situation, if and only if this participant in this situation commits herself to “ $(P_1 \wedge P_2 \wedge \dots \wedge P_n) \Rightarrow T$,” or would do so if requested. The positive relevance of a reason for “T” can then be clarified with this notion of sufficiency. Proposition “ P_1 ” is positively relevant to proposition “T” for a participant in a particular dialogue context, if and only if for the participant in that particular dialogue context, either “ P_1 ” would, if acceptable, provide sufficient support (defeasibly or not) for “T,” or if there are propositions “ P_2, \dots, P_n ” available to the participant such that “ P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n ” would, if they *all* would be acceptable, provide sufficient support (defeasibly or not) for “T,” whereas “ P_2, \dots, P_n ” would not.”²³

²³ Blair's notion of “premissary relevance” is close to this notion of relevance, yet differs in three respects. First, in his view, a premise “ P_1 ”, to be relevant to “T,” must really lend support to the thesis “T”, whereas in my view it suffices if the receiver of the argument thinks so. Second, in his view the other propositions, “ P_2, \dots, P_n ,” which together with “ P_1 ” are sufficient to support “T,” have been asserted by the proponent, whereas in my view it

After having been refuted by the proponent, the opponent might advance a new counterconsideration, “D”, in a second attempt to explain how her critical stance towards “T” constitutes a tenable position.²⁴ If the proponent also attempts to refute “D” as false, “¬D” must be seen as a second reason in favour of “T,” also being positively relevant to “T” and the two thus generated reasons constitute the proponent’s “convergent”²⁵ argument for “T”: “T, because both ¬C and ¬D,” if at least the two counterconsiderations had been dissimilar enough.

Refuting the counterconsideration as insufficient to defeat the argument

A second way of trying to refute the opponent’s counterconsideration would be to deny that “C,” if true, would undermine the proponent’s thesis “T.” For example, if the proponent reasons “You ought to take your son to this movie (T),” and the opponent challenges it, adding that “the lawn might need to be cut (C),” then the proponent may, regardless of whether “T” is the main thesis or a subordinate one, try to refute it by denying that thesis “T” is false if the counterconsideration “C” is true: “It is quite possible that you ought to take your son to this movie, even though your lawn does need cutting (¬(C⇒¬T)).” In this way, the proponent denies that the

suffices if these additional premises are in some way or other available in the dialogue context. Third, in his view, the proponent himself should consider “P₁, P₂, ..., P_n” to provide sufficient support, whereas in my view, the possibility of a purely *ex concessis* argument would suffice to make “P₁” relevant to “T” (Blair, 1992, p. 205).

²⁴ Note that the opponent might acknowledge the proponent’s reason “¬C” as positively relevant to his thesis “T” even when she entertains a second counterconsideration “D,” for in her view there might be a list of propositions, among which “¬D” such that when “¬C” is added to the list, “T” should be accepted as true, *if* all propositions in this list were acceptable.

²⁵ In a convergent argument each reason advanced by the proponent provides a positively relevant consideration such that each remains positively relevant also when the others are taken away from the argument, and such that each of the individual reasons does not suffice to support the conclusion, whereas, or so it is claimed by the proponent of that kind of argument, the collection of all individual reasons do sufficiently converge towards the acceptance of the thesis (See for a terminological survey: Snoeck Henkemans, 2001, pp. 111-116).

opponent's counterconsideration is sufficient to defeat his case. On the opponent's request, the proponent should argue in its favour: "for the picture will be gone tomorrow (U)."²⁶

Proponent:	T
Opponent:	Why T? Counter C.
Proponent:	$\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$
Opponent:	Why $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$?
Proponent:	U

Figure 3

When wrapped as a complex argument, where the opponent's moves are left implicit, the argument might read: "You ought to take your son to this movie (T), since because it will be gone by tomorrow (U), even if your lawn needs cutting you really should go there with your son ($\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$)," which I will refer to as a complex argument of type 2.

T, because $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$. $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$, because U.

Figure 4. Complex argument of type 2

²⁶ The refutation of a counterconsideration as insufficient to defeat an argument resembles Rescher's notion of a "strong distinction," which is like a weak distinction, but now advanced by the proponent in such a way that he incurs a genuine burden of proof: "T/(C&U) & !(C&U)," where X/Y means that X obtains, other things being equal, when Y does, where "!(C&U)" indicates that "C&U" is categorically asserted, where "T" is the thesis defended by the proponent, where "U" is the reason that the proponent advances in support of "T," and where "C" is, what I label, the counterconsideration, and which is overridden by "U." Like in the case of a weak distinction, Rescher makes the proponent say: "I affirm that both U and C, and the conjunction of U and C constitutes a good reason for T" (cf. Rescher, 1977, p. 12), whereas in the framework proposed here, the proponent is saying something like "I affirm that U, and U is a good reason for denying that C is a good reason for not-T". When translated to formulae in the language of first-order propositional logic, both responses are equivalent: " $(U \wedge C) \wedge ((U \wedge C) \rightarrow T)$ " and " $U \wedge (U \rightarrow \neg(C \rightarrow \neg T))$." In other words: Rescher's notion of a strong distinction can be reduced to the dialectical terminology that I employ here.

3.2 Counterconsiderations focused on a connection premise

Refuting the counterconsideration as false

Suppose the proponent argues that "You ought to buy two tickets for the movies, because you are taking your son to the movies (T, because U)," and the opponent challenges the argument's connection premise, saying "Why should I buy two tickets for the movies if I take my son to the movies? As far as you've shown, you could buy us these tickets! (Why $U \Rightarrow T$? Counter C)." Then the proponent has the option to refute the counterconsideration as false or unacceptable, "I can't buy you these tickets ($\neg C$)," possibly also arguing in favour of its correctness, "I am out of money (V)."

Proponent:	T
Opponent:	Why T?
Proponent:	U
Opponent:	Why $U \Rightarrow T$? Counter C.
Proponent:	$\neg C$ (as a reason for $U \Rightarrow T$)
Opponent:	Why $\neg C$?
Proponent:	V (as a reason for $\neg C$)

Figure 5

This attempt at refutation, again, functions as part of the proponent's defence of his thesis, which can be seen when wrapping it up as a complex argument: "You ought to buy two tickets for the movies. If you are to take your son there, which you are, it's you who needs to buy tickets, since because I'm out of money, I can't do so for you" or more naturally, by leaving the intermediate thesis implicit: "If you are to take your son to the movies, which you are, it's you who needs to buy tickets, for I'm out of money," which I will refer to as a complex argument of type 3.²⁷

²⁷ As explained in Note 13, the opponent's move would, in Rescher's terminology, amount to a weak distinction: "not- $T/(C \& U)$ & $\dagger(C \& U)$." A weak distinction, when translated to the language of propositional logic, would read: " $(U \wedge C) \wedge ((U \wedge C) \rightarrow \neg T)$." In my dialogue, the reasoning of the opponent when offering her counterconsideration could be translated to:

T, because U. $U \Rightarrow T$, because $\neg C$. $\neg C$, because V.

Figure 6. Complex argument of type 3

The proponent may make his argument more concise by leaving “ $U \Rightarrow T$ ” (or even “ $U \Rightarrow T$, because $\neg C$ ”) implicit, so that “ $\neg C$ ” (or even “V”) is simply added to the initial reason “U”: “You ought to buy two tickets for the movies, because first, you ought to take your son to the movies, and second—being out of money – I can’t buy them for you.”²⁸

Refuting the counterconsideration as insufficient to defeat

Suppose the proponent argues that “You ought to take your son to the movies, because the picture is ideal for children (T, because U)” and the opponent responds with a challenge focused on the connection premise, adding the counterconsideration that “my lawn needs cutting (Why $U \Rightarrow T$? Counter C).” Then the proponent may want to refute the counterconsideration’s sufficiency to defeat his argument, for instance by saying: “You ought to take your son to the movies if the picture is ideal for children, even though the lawn may need cutting,” and he can advance this as a reason to support the initial connection premise ($U \Rightarrow T$, because $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$).

Again, he may give a reason in support of the claim that the counterconsideration is insufficient to defeat his argument: “because the picture will be gone tomorrow (V)”:

“ $U \wedge (U \rightarrow \neg(C \rightarrow \neg T))$.” Both formulae are, as stated in Note 26, equivalent. In other words: Rescher’s notion of a weak distinction can be reduced to the dialectical terminology that I employ here.

²⁸ Of course, the proponent may also consider just accepting the correctness of the counterconsideration, as well as its sufficiency to defeat his argument, and repair his apparently incomplete argument by augmenting his argument with a fresh new reason, hoping that the resulting argument has a connection premise that is acceptable: “You ought to buy two tickets for the movies, because first, you ought to take your son to the movies, and second you have enough money for buying it.” In that case, the proponent has not tried to refute the counterconsideration, but accepted its force, and repairs his flawed argument accordingly.

<p>Opponent: Why $U \Rightarrow T$? Counter C. Proponent: $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$ (as a reason for $U \Rightarrow T$) Opponent: Why $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$? Proponent: V (as a reason for $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$)</p>

Figure 7

This corresponds to the following kind of complex argument: “You ought to take your son to the movies (T), because the picture is ideal for children (U). And you should, given that it’s ideal ($U \Rightarrow T$), because you should (this being so) even though your lawn may need cutting ($\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$), because the picture will be gone tomorrow (V),” which I will refer to as a complex argument of type 5.”

<p>T, because U. $U \Rightarrow T$, because $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$. $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$, because V</p>

Figure 8. Complex argument of type 4

Again, the proponent may choose to make his argument more concise by leaving “ $U \Rightarrow T$ ” (or even “ $U \Rightarrow T$, because $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$ ”) implicit, so that “ $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$ ” (or even “V”) is simply added to the initial reason “U”: “You ought to take your son to the movies (T), because the picture is ideal for children (U) and, given that the picture will be gone tomorrow (V), your lawn needing cutting should not refrain you from doing so ($\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(U \Rightarrow T))$).”

Refuting a counterconsideration as dismissible

The proponent may hold that “C” is overly far-fetched, contrived, indicative only of an abnormal situation, and thereby not really in need of a more substantial type of refutation. Even if “C” indicates a situation where one can consistently maintain all the premises as concessions and yet challenge the conclusion, so that “C” proves the existence of a logical counterexample that shows the proponent’s reasoning to be logically invalid, this logical possibility may be too far removed from the kinds of

situations that need to be reckoned with, for the purposes of the participants at hand, and thereby insufficiently pertinent or realistic. Note that this only applies to defeasible reasoning on the proponent's part and that, if he himself claims to have offered a logically valid argument,²⁹ this kind of refutation of a counterconsideration should not be available to him.

4. Fully responsive ways of taking counterconsideration into account

An attempt to refute the opponent's counterconsideration in one of these ways is responsive to a certain extent, but such a response by the proponent need not yet be *fully responsive*, as I will use this term. The proponent's reaction against the opponent's counterconsideration would be fully responsive if he makes it clear for each of the components of the opponent's counterconsideration whether he wants to refute it or whether he refrains from doing so and acknowledges it. I deal here with "strong acknowledgement," where the arguer himself recognizes a virtue of a counterconsideration, in distinction to "weak acknowledgement" where it is merely recognized that some other person recognizes or might recognize this positive feature (Govier 1999, pp. 155-156). In this section, I will list the fully responsive options, and examine how the resulting dialogues can be wrapped up in complex arguments. We will find that typical examples of conduction correspond to one of these types of full responses. With the aim to situate conductive argument among its close relatives, I list all six full responses to a counterconsideration.

Disregarding situations where the proponent refutes a counterconsideration as dismissible, the proponent could be fully responsive by making it both clear whether he attempts to refute the counterconsideration's acceptability, or whether he acknowledges it, and whether he attempts to refute its sufficiency to defeat a thesis, or whether he acknowledges it.

²⁹ This applies both to situations where he presents his reasoning as *primitively* valid, i.e. as having a conclusion that cannot be false in any conceivable world where its premises are true, which can be determined without needing to translate the reasoning to a formal language, and to situations where he presents his reasoning as *formally* valid, i.e. as instantiating a valid reasoning form, i.e. a form that does not allow of substitution instances where the premises are true and the conclusion false.

However, just as a reason "U" in the proponent's argument can be positively relevant to the proponent's (subordinate) thesis "T" without being a sufficient reason, so a counterconsideration "C" can be positively relevant to *its* conclusion, " $\neg T$ ", which can also be rephrased as "C" being *negatively relevant* to the proponent's thesis "T" (cf. Govier 1999, p. 155). I will also take into account the option for the proponent to either try to refute or acknowledge the counterconsideration's negative relevance vis-à-vis his thesis, both because this enhances the responsiveness of the proponent's contribution and because the acknowledgement of negative relevance plays a role in those complex arguments that are commonly referred to as conductive arguments.³⁰

Before dealing with these options, it is good to examine in some more detail what it could mean to acknowledge a counterconsideration's negative relevance. In line with my view on the positive relevance of a reason to its conclusion, the acknowledgement of the negative relevance of " C_1 ," in a particular context, amounts to a recognition to the effect that there are propositions " C_2, \dots, C_n " available to the opponent such that if no " C_1 " in " C_1, C_2, \dots, C_n ," could be refuted as false by the proponent, the conjunction of " C_1, C_2, \dots, C_n " *would* successfully refute his (subordinate) thesis (or connection premise) "T." If this acknowledgement of " C_1 's" negative relevance is combined with an attempt to refute " C_1 's" sufficiency to defeat, it could be taken as bad news to the opponent, in so-far as she did not (yet) succeed in finding an unanswerable critique, but also as an encouragement to extend her counterconsideration so that the final result (in the example: " C_1, \dots, C_n ") is irrefutable by the proponent.

Given that it would be incoherent to acknowledge counterconsideration "C's" sufficiency to defeat proposition "T," and try to refute its negative relevance to "T," there are six fully responsive options for the proponent: (a) acknowledging "C's" acceptability, negative relevance and sufficiency to defeat; (b) acknowledging its acceptability, and negative relevance, and denying its sufficiency to defeat; (c) acknowledging its

³⁰ There are many other positive features of the counterconsideration that can be denied or acknowledged, such as its being 'nicely phrased' or 'inventive,' yet I will abstract from these other possible virtues of a counterconsideration.

acceptability, and denying its relevance and sufficiency to defeat; (d) denying its acceptability and sufficiency to defeat, and acknowledging its negative relevance; (e) denying its acceptability, and acknowledging its relevance and sufficiency to defeat; (f) denying all - and these will be discussed in turn.³¹ In the examples, I will for the main part focus on those fully responsive reactions against a counterconsideration that focuses on a (subordinate) thesis, and refrain from discussing a proponent who needs to defend his connection premise.

(a) The proponent may concede defeat, or at least partial defeat, by acknowledging “C’s” acceptability, negative relevance and sufficiency to defeat. In that case, he should either develop a new line of defence of his thesis, or give up his position: “Yes, I guess you’re right. I stand corrected.”

Wrapped up as a complex argument, if it can still be called an “argument,” the result might read: “I have been thinking that this book is a good buy, on account of its having a good story. However, pondering on the issue led me to think that it is very expensive, which, indeed, devastates my reason for considering it a good buy.”

(b) The proponent may acknowledge “C’s” acceptability and negative relevance, yet deny its sufficiency to defeat. So, the proponent might defend that “this book is a good buy.” Against the opponent, who puts forward as a counterconsideration “but it’s quite expensive, isn’t it?”, the proponent may acknowledge both its correctness and negative relevance by saying something to the effect that “Yes, you have a point. But it has an exciting story, and so it actually *is* a good buy,” in that way giving a reason in support of his claim that the counterconsideration is not sufficient to defeat his argument.

The proponent can convey the acknowledgement of “C” being negatively relevant, simply by giving the positive reason

³¹ As Johnson, following Govier, uses the term, a *counterconsideration* is, by definition, *really* negatively relevant to the thesis at hand (Johnson 2011, p. 59; Govier 2011, p. 267). According to the account in Krabbe and van Laar (2011), however, a counterconsideration is presented as negatively relevant by the opponent, and the proponent may disagree, yet without denying that the opponent’s proposition counts as a *counterconsideration*. This terminological divergence can be explained by Johnson’s and Govier’s assumption that a counterconsideration is part of an argument’s illative core, and by definition acknowledged as negatively relevant by the proponent of the argument in which it is mentioned, whereas Krabbe and van Laar also allow for a proposition being a counterconsideration if it is only the opponent who considers it to be (among other things) negatively relevant.

(“it has an exciting story”), in that way suggesting that when “C” would be added to “It does *not* have a good story” the resulting counterconsideration *would* be sufficient to defeat the argument, possibly after having extended the set of counterconsiderations even further. (Given that he considers the story exciting, not all premises would then be true, in the proponent’s view). The positive reason (“It has an exciting story”) supports the thesis at hand. But in this specific context, it does so in a subtle way, for it specifically conveys the message that “C” is negatively relevant, but insufficient to defeat the argument. In other words: “In a different dialogical situation, where the book would not have had an exciting story, the counterconsideration might have refuted the thesis. However, given that it has an exciting story, that’s not the case in the current situation.”

Wrapped up as a complex argument, the result might read: “This book is a good buy. For although it is quite expensive, it has an exciting story.” What was in the previous section discussed as the proponent’s refutation of the counterconsideration as insufficient to defeat is included in this complex argument. This forms a variant of the argument of type 2,³² albeit that it is more complex in containing an acknowledgement.

If the proponent had already given an argument in favour of his thesis, and the opponent advances her counterconsideration as a criticism focused on the connection premise of that argument, then the new reason can be offered in addition to the acknowledgement of the counterconsideration’s correctness and negative relevance. For example “This book is a good buy, even though it is quite expensive. For the story is not only very exciting, but also very humorous.” In that case, the newly added reason can be seen as support for the denial of the counterconsideration’s sufficiency to defeat the connection premise, and forms a concise variant of a complex argument of type 4.³³

(c) The proponent could acknowledge “C’s” acceptability, but deny its relevance and sufficiency to defeat. If, for example, the opponent challenges the thesis “This is a good

³² See Figure 4.

³³ See Figure 8.

book” by countering that “it is quite expensive,” the proponent might respond: “Yes it is. However, that does not speak in any way against my thesis.”

Wrapped up as a complex argument, the result might read: “This is a good book. Though it is quite expensive, its price does not speak against its quality in any way.” Again, what was in the previous section discussed as a complex argument of type 2 (or of type 4 if the counterconsideration focused on a connection premise)³⁴ is included in this complex argument, if the proponent argues in support of his denial.³⁵

(d) The proponent may deny “C’s” acceptability, and “C’s” sufficiency to defeat and acknowledge its negative relevance. If, for example, the opponent challenges the thesis “This book is a good buy” by countering “but it is quite expensive” the proponent might respond: “If it were expensive it would detract somewhat from my thesis, however without defeating it completely. By the way, it is not expensive at all.”

Wrapped up as a complex argument, the result might read: “This book is a good buy. If it were expensive, it would detract somewhat from my thesis. But then, it isn’t.” What was in the previous section discussed as the proponent’s refutation of the counterconsideration as insufficient to defeat (complex arguments of type 2, respectively of type 4, if the proponent’s connection premise was attacked) and as false (of type 1,³⁶ respectively of type 3,³⁷ in case of connection criticism) are both included in this complex argument if the proponent supports the denial of the counterconsideration’s correctness and the denial of its sufficiency to defeat.

(e) The proponent may deny “C’s” acceptability, and acknowledge “C’s” relevance and sufficiency to defeat. If, for example, the opponent challenges the thesis “This book is a good buy” by countering “but it is very expensive” the proponent might respond: “If it were very expensive it would ruin my case. But, in my view, it’s quite cheap, really.”

³⁴ See Figure 4, and Figure 8.

³⁵ Note that not only the acknowledgement of correctness and negative relevance, as in option b, can be conventionally indicated with the “even though” clause, but also the acknowledgement of just its correctness (different from what is suggested in Hansen 2011, pp. 42-48, and Adler 2013).

³⁶ See Figure 2.

³⁷ See Figure 6.

Wrapped up as a complex argument, the result might read: “This is a good buy. Of course, it would not be a good buy, if it would be very expensive. But then, it’s quite cheap, really.” This forms the beginning of a complex argument of type 1 (or one of type 3 if the connection premise was at issue) if the proponent proceeds with supporting his denial of the counterconsideration.

(f) The proponent may deny C’s acceptability, C’s sufficiency to defeat, as well as C’s negative relevance, responding with: “Utter and complete nonsense!”

Wrapped up as a complex argument, the result might read: “This is a good book. One might counter that it is an expensive book. But that’s simply false, as well as utterly irrelevant.” What was discussed in the previous section as the proponent’s refutation of the counterconsideration as insufficient for defeat and as false are both included in this complex argument.

This completes the list of six fully responsive options for a proponent confronted with a counterconsideration from an opponent who manages to raise highly directive criticism, yet without adopting any standpoint of her own.

5. Some conclusions about conduction

Among those scholars who are attracted by the idea that conductive arguments form a separate type of argument, distinguishable from deduction and induction (see for example Wellman, 1971; Govier 1999, 2001), the issue of how to conceptualize conduction and define "conduction" has been discussed extensively. Govier defines conductive arguments as “arguments in which premises are put forward as separately and non-conclusively relevant to support a conclusion, against which negatively relevant considerations may also be acknowledged” (Govier, 2011, p. 262). It has been this conception of conduction, and closely related ones, that I have in mind when drawing some conclusions.

1. Conductive arguments of pattern 1 (see Introduction) are closely related to those complex arguments with which a proponent tries to refute one counterconsideration against his thesis as either false or as insufficient to defeat his argument, yet

without acknowledging the counterconsideration to be either correct, negatively relevant or sufficient to defeat (See Section 3). What others would regard as part of the argument's illative core (Johnson, 2011), is from a full-fledged dialectical point of view analysed as a response to a critical reaction, either real or imagined. Many, if not all argumentative uses of premise(s)-conclusion complexes can be understood to have been generated in a dialogue in which an opponent advances a bound challenge, so that the proponent feels encouraged to refute the challenge's counterconsideration, and to thus produce his premise(s). However, such arguments need not *always* constitute conduction for possibly, depending upon one's preferred conception of conduction, there are constraints on what may count as conduction, such as Wellman's requirement that all the argument's elements are about the same case without appeal to other cases, or Hitchcock's requirement that what is predicated in the argument's conclusion supervenes on what is predicated in the premises (2013).³⁸ This same proviso applies to the next two conclusions.

2. Conductive arguments of pattern 2 are closely related to the complex arguments with which a proponent tries to refute more than one counterconsideration against his thesis as either false or as insufficient to defeat, so that it gives rise to two or more separately positively relevant reasons in favour of the proponent's thesis, provided the refuted counterconsiderations have been relatively independent from one another (See Section 3).

3. Conductive arguments of pattern 3 (labelled: "pro and con argument" by Fischer, 2011; "balance of considerations arguments" by Hansen, 2011; "appeal to considerations" by Hitchcock, 2013; "pro/con arguments" by Johnson, 2011, and by Paglieri, 2013) are related to the complex arguments with which the proponent gives that full response to a counterconsideration in which he acknowledges the counterconsideration as acceptable and as negatively relevant to his thesis, but where he tries to refute its sufficiency to defeat (See Section 4).

³⁸ According to Hitchcock: "we can define conductive reasonings and arguments as those in which a supervenient status is attributed to a subject of interest on the basis of one or more features of that subject, with possible acknowledgement of features that count against the attribution" (Hitchcock 2013, p. 206).

Let's first consider a simplified version of a Wellman's argument of conduction: "Although your lawn needs cutting, you ought to take your son to the movies because the picture is ideal for children." In this example the positive reason in favour of the thesis and the acknowledgement of the counterconsideration suggest that the counterconsideration is acknowledged as acceptable as well as negatively relevant for the thesis but not as sufficient to defeat. The following dialogue can be seen to underlie it:

Proponent: You ought to take your son to the movies (T).

Opponent: Why? For all you've shown, my lawn needs cutting! (C)

Proponent: Okay. But though your lawn might need cutting, you ought to go. ($\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$)

Opponent: Why?

Proponent Because the picture is ideal for children. (S)

Dialogue 1.

The argument diagram (where an arrow indicates that the proponent's advances what is above the arrow as sufficient support for what is below the arrow) that captures this reading of the conductive argument is:

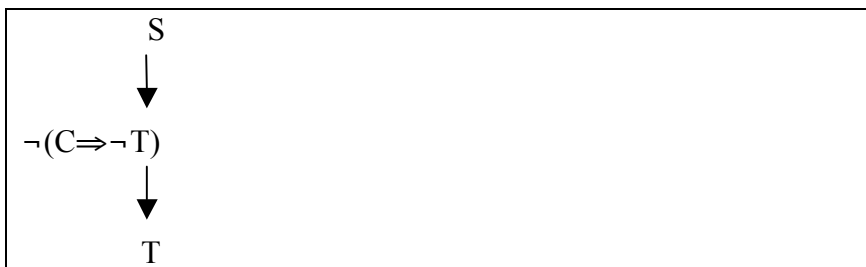


Figure 9.

Thus, when it comes to diagramming of conductive argument, I would propose to just include the denial of the counterconsideration's sufficiency to defeat as a premise node.

Let's now return to Wellman's full example: "Although your lawn needs cutting, you ought to take your son to the movies because the picture is ideal for children and will be gone

by tomorrow” (Wellman, 1971, p. 57). Due to the occurrence of two positive reasons, the example can be seen as containing an ambivalence, for it can be generated from two different types of dialogues sequences. (1) First, the counterconsideration could have been focused on the main thesis (See dialogue 1, below). (2) Second, the counterconsideration could have been focused on the connection between the first (or second) positive reason, “the picture is deal for children” and the thesis, so that the second (or first) positive reason, “it will be gone by tomorrow,” functions to support the proponent’s denial that the counterconsideration shows the connection between the first (or: second) reason and the thesis to be false (See dialogue 2, below).

Proponent: You ought to take your son to the movies (T).
Opponent: Why? For all you've shown, my lawn needs cutting! (C)
Proponent: Okay. But though your lawn might need cutting, you ought to go. ($\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$)
Opponent: Why?
Proponent Because the picture is ideal for children. (S)
Opponent: How would that support that I ought to go even if my lawn needs cutting? (Why $S \Rightarrow (\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T))$?)
Proponent: It will be gone by tomorrow. (V)
Dialogue 1.

The argument diagram that captures this reading of the conductive argument is (where “&” indicates single or complementary argumentation):

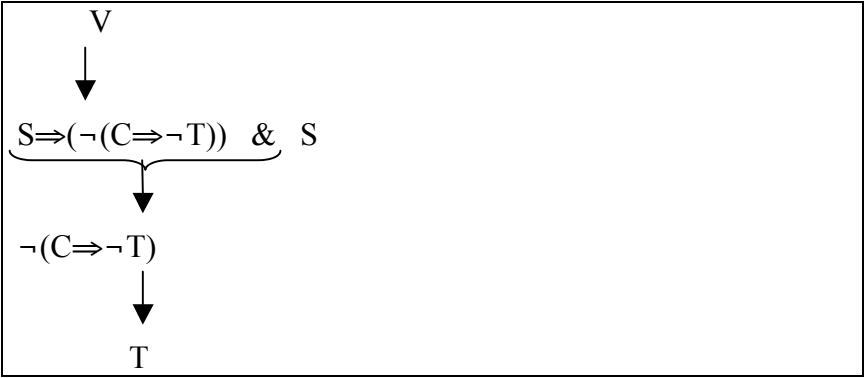


Figure 10. Diagram for dialogue 1

Proponent: You ought to take your son to the movies. (T)

Opponent: Why?

Proponent: Because the picture is ideal for children. (S)

Opponent: Why would I take my son there, if the picture is ideal for children? My lawn might need cutting, for all you've shown.

(Why $S \Rightarrow T$? How about C?)

Proponent: You need to take your son to the movies, if the picture is ideal for children, even though your lawn might need cutting. ($\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(S \Rightarrow T))$)

Opponent: Why?

Proponent: Because, it will be gone by tomorrow. (V)

Dialogue 2.

The argument diagram that captures this second reading of the conductive argument is:

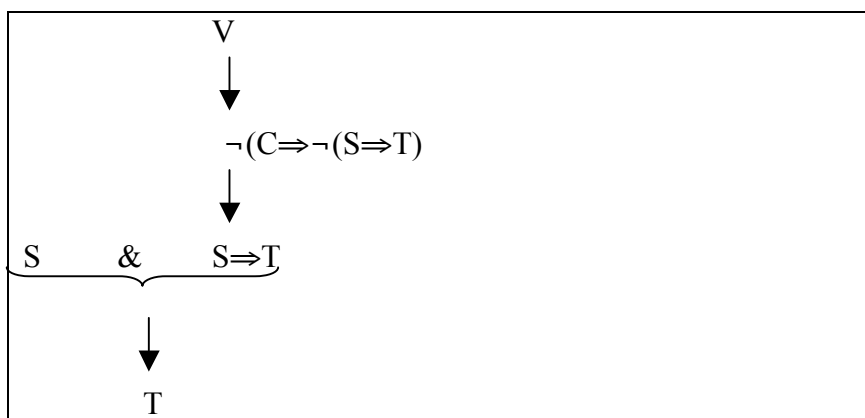


Figure 11. Diagram for Dialogue 2

Both readings of Wellmann's example can be diagrammed more tersely by leaving out some details, which shows that these two readings are only subtly different:



Figure 12

However, if one aims to show how the counterconsideration functions in the proponent's argument in some detail, I propose to include in the diagram the proposition that the counterconsideration does not show the thesis or connection premise to be false ($\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$ or $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(S \Rightarrow T))$).

4. There seems to be no good reason for assigning special importance in a theory of argumentation to a complex argument in which the proponent acknowledges the counterconsideration to be acceptable as well as negatively relevant to his thesis, yet not sufficient to defeat the argument. The other full responses seem to merit equal treatment (Van Laar, 2013).

5. Govier writes that: "In acknowledging counterconsiderations while at the same time putting forward supporting premises and asserting the conclusion to be supported by good reasons, an arguer is committing himself or herself to the claim that the *supporting considerations* "outweigh" the counter-considerations and render the conclusion acceptable" (Govier, 2011, p. 266). Similarly, others hold that a conductive argument contains a separate, though implicit, "on balance premise" (Hansen, 2011, pp. 38-39) or "on balance principle" (Zenker, 2011, p. 75) that expresses the arguer's commitment to the pros outweighing the cons. I would propose to identify the following proposition, part of the proponent's argument, as fulfilling the job of such *on balance* commitments, yet at the cost of losing the weighing metaphor, and its suggestion of a continuum of strengths: "It is not the case that if your counterconsideration C is true (acceptable), my thesis T (or connection premise) is false (indefensible)." For example, to return to our leading example of Section 4: "It is not the case that this book is not a good buy, if this book is quite expensive" or in Wellman's example: "It's not the case that you do not need to take your son to the movies, if your lawn needs cutting" (see premise $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg T)$ in Figure 9, and Figure 10, and premise $\neg(C \Rightarrow \neg(S \Rightarrow T))$ in Figure 11). Such a special

premise can lead the proponent, if challenged, to support this denial, thereby expanding on his case.

It may not be bad to abstain from relying heavily on the weighing metaphor when characterizing conduction. Although its connotation of automaticity and fake precision can be eliminated by conceiving of *weighing* as hefting in one's hand (Fischer, 2011, p. 86), the metaphor appeals to an act, the act of weighing, that is clearly non-discursive, and that wrongly suggests that this kind of "on balance" commitment within the proponent's argumentation is a matter of perception or personal experience, *and thereby less fit for further discussion*. However, there is no need to conceive of such assessments by the proponent as being the last word on the issue. In a good argumentative exchange, also subtle argumentative connections, or the lack thereof, can be a proper topic for debate. What is more, in a dialectical theory, we should encourage the opponent to critically test the proponent's claim that her counterconsideration does not show his thesis (or connection premise) to be indefensible. In order to encourage this critical attitude, the proponent should be advised not to present his point of view as the result of a process of weighing, but rather to formulate the proposition that the opponent's counterconsideration does not show his thesis (or connection premise) to be false or indefensible, so that it can be scrutinized if necessary. Thus, we should not rely too strongly on the idea of "weighing" the pros and cons.

6. Govier and Johnson hold that counterconsiderations differ from objections in being, by definition, negatively relevant to the thesis at issue, as well as being part of the argument's illative core rather than of its dialectical tier. Govier writes, conceding a point of criticism by Johnson: "Counterconsiderations, as explained above, are claims negatively relevant to the acceptability of the conclusion. Here we are dealing with those counterconsiderations that are acknowledged by the arguer. The arguer himself or herself is allowing these negatively relevant points, and indeed the counterconsiderations are part of his or her case. Objections to an argument, on the other hand, are not integral parts of that argument and are not part of the arguer's case. If after being raised in a dialectical context, they come to be incorporated into an adapted version of an arguer's case, they could at that point

play the role of counter-considerations. Thus the same point might be couched as an objection by someone other than the arguer and come to be acknowledged by the arguer as a counter-consideration” (2011, p. 267). Yet, as we have seen, the so-called illative core is in the current dialogical (if not “hyper-dialectical”, see Finocchiaro, 2005, p. 321) conception itself reducible to dialogue. Moreover, counterconsiderations can be encapsulated and acknowledged in complex argument in ways different from the conductive way of doing so. Thus, seeing a counterconsideration as a move by a critical opponent constitutes a more general account than the account by Johnson and Govier, yet without losing insights offered by their accounts. Therefore, I surmise that it is better to conceive of counterconsiderations, and the ways to take them into account, from a dialogical perspective.

7. Govier (2011, p. 269) explains why she is “rather resistant” to model, as Blair suggested (2011, p. 6), conduction as dialogue. For, then “something has been lost, namely the incorporation of both positively and negatively relevant factors into a single view. It is this element of balance, of fairness, of recognition that there are alternative views on behalf of which reasonable points can be made, that has for many been an especially important and intriguing aspect of pro and con conductive argument” (p. 269). As this paper has shown, nothing needs to be lost on a dialogical account, and dialogue may generate or underlie the arguments that take counterconsiderations into account.

8. The kind of criticism taken into account in a conductive argument can be a counterargument. But, as I hope to have shown, it can also be the kind of counterconsideration that is merely cautiously asserted, so that the proponent cannot challenge the opponent to defend the counterconsideration’s acceptability, or its sufficiency to defeat. Instead, it is up to the proponent to refute such a counterconsideration, and that is what happens in the examples of conductive argument.

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